

## AVOCADO MARKETING PROBLEM

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*Member of Harshe-Rotman & Druck, to the California Avocado Society, Annual Meeting, Fallbrook, California, October 21, 1972*

I've been asked today to tell you about the avocado marketing problem we were given and the unique way in which we went about trying to solve it.

During the five years we have handled the CAAB account, a great many innovations have been applied to the promotion of avocados.

We have communicated directly with doctors and their wives in order to correct misimpressions about the nutritional and caloric content of avocados . . .

As you well know, they're not fattening. One half shell has comparatively fewer calories — honest! — than a glass of milk or an average hamburger patty.

We have been working to build a tomorrow market by addressing future homemakers in home economics classrooms of some 50,000 high schools across the U.S.

Certainly our most successful innovation was one introduced during this year. Avocados were in short supply and prices to the consumer were bound to be high.

We needed innovative advertising and public relations to support avocados priced, as well you know, from 69c to — in one case we know of - \$1.29 apiece!

We studied an important trend among consumers to reject the artificial and to accept the natural. . . . We saw this trend operating in food as well as cosmetics.

Nutritional research told us that avocados contain 11 vitamins, 17% minerals, 16% natural oil, and 73% moisture. Good for you to eat. But also, we learned from dermatologists, good for smoothing and nourishing dry skin and hair.

As a matter of fact, some very expensive manufactured cosmetics — Revlon, Max Factor, Princess Borghese for example — use avocados as the base for conditioners . . . and cost as much as \$10 an ounce.

While 69c is a lot for avocados added to your salad, it is a bargain as a natural cosmetic to smooth your skin and condition your hair.

We saw the cosmetic characteristics of avocado as one more way to justify and promote the California avocado . . . even at \$1.29 . . . a bargain facial when compared to the manufactured products on the market. And just as effective . . . if not more so.

Preliminary tests of the avocado-cosmetic concept indicated a high level of interest on the part of homemakers for making facial treatments and hair conditioners at home.

From the beginning we worked with the beauty magazines — Vogue, Harper's Bazaar,

Glamour and Mademoiselle. The editors of these books also recognized the trend . . . and we were able to achieve striking color coverage in their magazines for our avocado cosmetic story. A beautiful testimonial to help us get started. To help us spread the word.

Based on our investigations, both old and new cosmetic secrets, many from the ancient Aztecs, were developed for a colorful booklet we created called "The Fresh Avocado Beauty Book". It was offered in our avocado cosmetic advertising and to viewers watching our demonstrations on TV through the year.

Our advertising was intended to shock women in awareness — the girl with the green face! Or green hair, stopped readers, intrigued them as our follow-up research later proved. Enough so, that our ads resulted in thousands of orders for the booklet, at \$1.00 per copy.

Glamour girls like the Noxema "Take-It-Off" girl, Gunilla Knudsen, appeared on prime time TV talk shows demonstrating the avocado cosmetics. . . .

Newspaper beauty editors loved our avocado cosmetic story so, that they helped us to spread the word by printing our photos and stories. Here are some examples of the generous coverage that intrigued women coast-to-coast.

The most influential of influentials — the beauty editors of leading women's interest magazines like Ladies Home Journal, McCall's, Good Housekeeping, Women's Day, Family Circle, plus lady commentators and newspaper columnists, got the word at a dramatic showing we staged at the world famous Lutece Restaurant in New York City.

When the women could see and actually feel the difference on our models, when they could appreciate the effective use of avocados as a cosmetic, as they did at our showing, they became true believers helping us to tell the world via editorials appearing coast-to-coast.

By this time we had really begun to make our impression. Other produce commodities with cosmetic attributes began to follow our lead and we started to effectively merchandise the avocado cosmetic concept, supporting the retail prices and building demand at the point of sale in the produce department.

Facials and hair care treatments using avocado were dramatically promoted via colorful mobile displays.

In the produce department everywhere displays selling the avocado beauty book at \$1.00 each began going up.

Together, displays and beauty books were an innovative new look at point-of-sale, and an imaginative way to support the sale of precious avocados.

But did it work? How do we know for certain?

Our answer, "Yes," as much as we can determine it did work. All of the California avocados brought to market resulted in a better than average fair return to the grower,

We conducted follow-up research to determine as accurately as possible how our cosmetic concept was selling.

In a research project questioning 1500 women who ordered the California Avocado beauty booklet we learned objectively through statistics some very revealing information about the success of our fresh avocado cosmetic campaign.

We learned that 38%, roughly 1/3rd, of the women questioned spent \$10 to \$30 a month on face and hair products. Now that makes the one dollar avocado sound positively low cost by comparison.

Two out of every three women, 68%, said they will continue to use fresh avocado as a part of their beauty routine.

Close to 3 out of 4, or 71%, of the ladies said they will use fresh avocado in place of the prepared products they previously purchased.

Now for some shockers:

One out of 4, 24% said they purchased an avocado for the first time in their lives when they bought it for cosmetic use. One of our continuing top objectives is to develop a new market, new avocado users. Think of the potential this means in attracting new avocado customers with the avocado cosmetic approach.

And how's this for being impressed with the miraculous good-for-you things the fresh avocado can do as a cosmetic? Over one half of the women questioned said they prefer to use them as a cosmetic rather than to eat them.

And we're not finished telling the story yet. Our continuing magazine campaign will feature the shocking, "What's that lady with an avocado slice on her face?" approach. And now even our radio advertising across the country will tout the cosmetic qualities of the fresh avocado.

Innovation? We think so! Success? We know so!

I appreciate your attention and have enjoyed talking to you.

Thank you.